cipate yearly in the great initiation festival for boys and girls. Consequently as they repeat each year the lessons of their own initiation, the ceremonies are the main vehicle of Yao culture.[1]

There are also two Moslem ceremonies:

(1) *Jandu*, the boys' Moslem baptism, which takes about seven days, and is usually worked in with *lupanda*:

(2) *Nzondo*, the girls' Moslem baptism, which is the same as *jandu*, but usually quite separate from *ciputu*. It is important that the wife of a Moslem should have her *nzondo* so that she knows how to prepare the food properly at Ramadan.

Menstrual and Other Taboos

Menstruation is held to be dangerous. A special mat is used by the woman during this time, and is rolled up and kept during the rest of the cycle. The hut is completely replastered after menstruation. Intercourse during menses leads to disease of the man. Sexual contact is dangerous to persons at certain other periods: during initiation ceremonies, during mourning, and for babies who have not been through the protective rite. The danger is thought to lie in *ndaka*, a dread disease characterized by swelling. This may be transmitted by salt in the food. Deaths are often attributed to 'salt'. Much of the significance of the mourning is that medicines are prepared which protect the mourners against the dangers attendant on sexual activity.

Burial Rites

News of a death must be sent to the chief by a messenger carrying a single fowl. The chief gives a present of calico for wrapping the body, and a goat for the burial men. These are called *awilo*, neighbours unrelated to the dead, who volunteer for certain duties. They prepare the body for burial and carry it in procession to the graveyard outside the village. No uninitiated person is allowed to see the funeral. All who attend the burial are prohibited from sexual intercourse for one month. After this time the prohibition is lifted by a ceremony of beer drinking and feasting, and on the following day all fires in the village are extinguished, and then relit, and the mourners are shaved. A year later beer is brewed for a final ceremony.

For a period after her husband's death a widow is unclean, and has to be purified by ritual intercourse with a man who is paid. The widow is not allowed to remarry for two or three years. A widower leaves his wife's village, after receiving a parting gift. The widows of ordinary persons are not inherited. If a man has himself a 'name' (rank and social position), he has an heir, who inherits also the wives of his predecessor. But if the heir (the maternal nephew) has married a cross-cousin (mother's brother's daughter) he would not consider the wife's mother as his inherited wife.

Before the burial the dead man's hut used to be destroyed, together with his possessions. Immediately afterwards a consultation is held as to whether retaliatory action against sorcerers is called for. The *awilo*'s duties include not only the conducting of the burial, but also the subsequent inquiry and the conduct of the second ceremony, the beer drinking, at which they shave the mourners. A man who has

[1] Main sources for girls' initiation: Heckel, 1935, p. 19; Seamus, 1, 1910, pp. 184–7; 4, 1922, pp. 269–74; Seamus and Dovey, 1913; Duff, 1903, pp. 312–15; Abdullah, 1919, pp. 16–17; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 225–30; Werner, 1906, pp. 126–7; Johnston, 1897, p. 410.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

When a villager died in pre-White days, the hut and personal effects were destroyed. Nowadays, with the improving type of dwelling, which frequently includes well-timbered doors and glass-windows, huts are treated with medicine to cleanse them of the harmful effects of the death and they are used again. But all houses must be repaired continually if they are to remain habitable. Eventually most houses fall beyond repair and new houses must be built. The women pull the poles out of the ground and use them for firewood and the site is planted with pumpkins or maize by the nearest relative.[1] A new hut site is then chosen according to the wishes of the owners. As a rule outsiders are neutral about this, and a village member selects a site in accordance with his or her social position in the village. The women still stay near their mother, but they may build on the outside fringe of a group of huts. When the mother's house collapses she may in turn build her hut on the outside fringe of the group near her daughter's hut. In this way the spatial distribution of the huts gradually comes to reflect the segmentation of the lineage.

As the woman's daughter's children grow up and marry, the woman's son persuades his wife's relatives to allow him to take his wife to live in his home village. If he is a polygynist he usually takes the senior wife, but he may take the other or others as well. His own daughters now marry uxorilocally in the village if their mother is still alive. If the parents live long enough their daughter's daughters in turn marry and build their huts there. A crisis comes when either the man or his wife dies. The children have to decide whether to stay where they are or to move back to their own matrilineal village. If they do stay at their father's village they form the nucleus of a patrilaterally-linked group. As they grow older the senior male of their matrilineage may come to live with them. Through the years while this internal differentiation is developing within the village, the huts are decaying and being rebuilt. While new hut sites are being selected the physical form of the village is reflecting the continuing social differentiation.

At the same time gardens are being planted and crops reaped each year. The soil in the first garden sites has probably been depleted already and is either lying fallow or is under cassava.

[1] Usually the name-heir of a woman, i.e. her daughter's daughter.

3:Stanzus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

765 might not break up for a week, but the practice was often modified to some degree, people returning to their homes during the day and coming back each night to sleep in the deceased's village. At the present time, there is a tendency to cut the proceedings short, and the mourners generally disperse on the second day after the funeral. This period of waiting is usually whiled away by playing and singing *chindimba*.

● 768 765 On the day before the company leaves the village — now, often on the day after the funeral — the ceremony of shaving the head takes place. The *ewile*, assisted in the case of a large party, by those who helped at the burial, shave the heads of all the dead man's relatives. When this is completed, they begin to tear down the deceased's house. The grass from the roof, with the hair removed from the heads of the relatives, is carried to the cross-roads and burned. The walls of earth are torn down and made into a heap; on the top, a stick is raised, and at its base is placed the dead man's snuff box. Sometimes a cactus euphorbia, *nyoka*, is planted on the mound and cassava round about. The snuff box is kept replenished with snuff. This, with the cassava, is reserved for the *ewile;* no one else may partake of them.

While the house is being pulled down, the chief *mbilo* ties around the neck of the widow a single string of beads or a small piece of calico, *ng'onji*. After the house has been demolished, the *ewile* return to their homes and on the following morning, everyone else departs.

767 The position of *mbilo* is a strange one. Every man in the course of his life probably acts as undertaker for some friend; many have probably performed the service several times. He receives no regular payment, but beads, and, nowadays, coins are often thrown into the pot of water with which he wets the heads of those he shaves after the funeral, and he has the freedom of the village in which he has so acted forever afterward, the degree of freedom being determined by the distance which he has travelled to officiate. When Wandalama died, a headman named Chisui from Makanjila's on Lake Nyasa, over a hundred miles away, acted as one of the *ewile*. The occasions on which he revisited Malemya's village are [431] well remembered, as they were marked by much frolicking and some obscenity. He was the recipient of enormous presents of fowls, sheep, and anything else he cared to take, and having commandeered men from the village to carry these gifts for him, he would leave, accompanied by all the people, yelling and shouting their joy at seeing him again.

Any fowls or other provisions that friends may present to the deceased's relatives at the time of the funeral to help defray expenses are given to the *ewile;* no one else may eat them. Some may be kept against the next death in the family.

768 622 A few days after the funeral, recourse is had to the chief to settle whether any action must be taken in regard to the cause of the death. Some near relative of the dead man will be chosen for this purpose; he must not be shaved by the *ewile* at the time of the funeral. The consultation takes place at some secluded spot outside the village. The chief always brings some one with him to witness what is said. On arriving at the appointed place, the chief salutes the unshaven mourner who is probably accompanied by other relatives, and

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

them listens to an account of the circumstances attending the illness and death. The point at issue is whether there is any evidence pointing to death from unnatural causes which requires consulting a diviner. The chief practically always agrees with the relatives, and it is said that he will never press them to go to the *wachisanga* unnecessarily. The case may end with this conference, or here may begin the long series of events described under *usuwi*.[1]

During the month subsequent to the funeral, certain taboos have to be observed. The widow may not bathe, and with the exception of the *awilo*, all who attended must refrain from sexual intercourse. At the expiration of this period, beer is brewed in the village, and all the friends and relatives are again summoned. This beer-drinking is called "the beer of rottenness," or "the beer of resignation." In addition to the beer, food is provided, and everyone helps himself without ceremony. *Chindimba* is sung and danced and at the present day, bands of trained dancers attend, including *ching'yengeng' wenye*.[2] A pot of beer is sunk into the ground, marking the site of the dead man's house. The night of *masapasa*[3] sees husbands and wives reunited, and the widow may go through ceremonial intercourse with a man appointed for the purpose called *lituwu* or *mbilo*. Sometimes the widow refuses *lituwu*, and is given medicine instead to cleanse her; her body is then no longer "hot" and likely to bring disease to those about her. A widow does not marry again for two or three years. A young man who loses his wife has no longer any standing in her village after *masapasa*. He is usually given a present, with the suggestion that he go elsewhere. After the death of an infant, the mother is considered unclean. She sleeps on a mat apart from her husband till after the ceremony of shaving, and then undergoes a ceremonial coitus with her husband — in which case he is called *lituwu* — after which, ordinary cohabitation is resumed. If she has been a widow, or if the child was born "with disease,"[4] another man acts as *lituwu*.

The morning following *masapasa*, all the fires in the village are extinguished. A fresh blaze is then kindled with the fire-drill, *lusungu*, either in the chief's house or in some spot nearby, and from there, fire is carried to all the houses. The ashes of the old fires, the stones supporting the cooking pots, and the porridge sticks are taken to the cross-roads, and there destroyed. Everyone then shaves all his own hair, head, axillae, and pubis. The custom of the second shaving by the *awilo*, described in *Africana*,[5] is, I think, an adaptation from the Anyanja. A year later, beer is again brewed, and all the relatives summoned to the village to partake of it. There is dancing, but no ceremony.

The Yao bury their dead in regular graveyards in wooded country, the thicker the forest the better, often two or three miles away from a group of villages. Different villages bury their dead in different parts of the burial ground; relatives are usually buried near one another. Graves are never revisited, and no one would enter a graveyard except at the time of a funeral, and then only after obtaining permission from the chief. Such spots are

[1] Vide infra, p. 396.
[2] Vide infra, p. 370 and Pl. I.
[3] Beer-drinking.
[4] Vide infra, p. 388.
[5] Macdonald, op. cit., p. 111.